

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 03122 031309Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-07 AID-05 CEA-01
CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07
INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-15
OES-06 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-10 PA-02 PRS-01
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R 031201Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1659
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 3122

DEPT. PLEASE PASS TO USBURMINES

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG,IN,EMIN

SUBJECT: OFFSHORE FIRE INTERRUPTS BOMBAY HIGH CRUDE PRODUCTION

1. CRUDE PRODUCTION FROM THE BOMBAY HIGH HAS BEEN SUSPENDED SINCE FEBRUARY 24 WHEN A FIRE BROKE OUT ON ONE OF TWO OFFSHORE PRODUCTION PLATFORMS. ALTHOUGH THE CAUSE OF THE FIRE IS STILL UNDER INVESTIGATION, IT IS BELIEVED THAT A SPARK FROM ONE OF THE GENERATORS IGNITED VENT GASES AROUND THE PLATFORM WHICH ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS HAD ACCUMULATED AS A RESULT OF VERY CALM WEATHER CONDITIONS.

2. SEVEN PERSONS INCLUDING TWO FROM THE OIL AND NATURAL GAS COMMISSION (ONGC) AND FIVE (NON-AMERICAN) FROM MCDERMOTT (US CONTRACTOR INSTALLING THE PLATFORMS) SUSTAINED INJURIES AND WERE FLOWN TO BOMBAY FOR TREATMENT. THE INDIAN PRESS REPORTS DR. PRASAD, ONGC CHAIRMAN, AS SAYING THAT THE DAMAGE TO THE

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PAGE 02 NEW DE 03122 031309Z

PLATFORM AND EQUIPMENT WAS "TOTALLY INCONSEQUENTIAL."

3. ONGC HOPES TO RESUME PRODUCTION ABOUT MARCH 10, BUT THIS IS STILL TO BE CONFIRMED. ONGC EXPECTS TO USE THIS INTERVENING PERIOD FOR INTERCONNECTING SUBSEA PIPELINES TO THREE OTHER PLATFORMS UNDER ERECTION.

4. COMMENT: AT THE TIME OF THE ACCIDENT CRUDE PRODUCTION WAS AROUND 36,000 B/D FROM TWO FOUR-WELL PLATFORMS ('A' AND 'D'). PRODUCTION WAS HALTED SINCE THE FIRE OCCURRED ON PLATFORM 'A' WHICH AT PRESENT CONTAINS THE ONLY SEPARATION UNIT (WITH A 40,000 B/D CAPACITY) HANDLING THE CRUDE OUTPUT. HOWEVER, A SECOND 40,000 B/D SEPARATION UNIT IS BEING INSTALLED ON PLATFORM 'C' WHICH WILL BEING THE TOTAL PRODUCTION POTENTIAL FOR THE BOMBAY HIGH TO 80,000 B/D EQUIVALENT TO FOUR MILLION METRIC TONS PER ANNUM). THIS IS CONSIDERED MORE OR LESS THE UPPER LIMIT OF THIS FIELD'S PRODUCTION CAPABILITY UNTIL THE INSTALLATION OF TWO SUBSEA PIPELINES (CRUDE AND GAS) WHICH THE GOI HOPES TO HAVE ON STREAM BEFORE THE 1978 MONSOON SEASON.

SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

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